

APPENDIX IV

COMMUNICATIONS PLAN STRATEGIES

A. PHASE 1 - COMMUNITY OUTREACH FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

Phase 1 of the communications strategy begins after the Board of Supervisors is briefed on the Study and authorizes the County staff to continue with program development, clarification of the levels of service and finalization of the funding options recommendation. This Phase continues through the early spring, when staff will bring to the Board the final program implementation recommendations. This portion of the Plan is designed to raise awareness in the public of challenges in Fairfax County for pollution control, regulatory compliance and program development. It is also focused on refinement of the level of service requirements to build the stormwater program to meet community expectations.

The “public” of interest in the earliest phase of the communications program includes the potential significant ratepayers, apartment/condominium owners, commercial/office property owners, developers and non-profits (i.e. those most notably affected by the new policies). In Fairfax County, it may also be useful to host a meeting with environmental advocates, concerned watershed groups, and other potential supporters of effective stormwater management. The press is a focus of attention during this period.

The goal of the message during this phase of the communications program is to educate and build support, as well as to attempt to bring opposing stakeholder groups to at least a position of neutrality toward the enhanced stormwater program. Therefore the message highlights the current problems experienced by Fairfax County residents; it notes that all properties generate runoff; it stresses the benefits of the planned stormwater program; it introduces the concept of a fairer and more stable way to pay for the program, and it gives basic information on the process that is used to determine rates and credits. Attention should also be given to educating County employees on the overall stormwater initiatives and funding strategies of the organization to meet the County’s needs in stormwater.

This plan is divided into specific initial steps that must be undertaken as early as possible and then other ongoing activities that should be consistently used throughout the Buildup Phase.

1. INITIAL COMMUNICATIONS STEPS

There are several important pieces of work that form the foundation for future communications that will be initiated simultaneously at the beginning of the implementation phase:

- Production of initial written materials for use with various audiences;
- Initial briefings of key stakeholders
- Creation of a Stormwater Advisory Committee

The product of these initiatives provides both the initial specific test messages and the vehicles from which to test them. An explanation of each of these activities follows:



- Initial Briefing of Key Audiences

During July, the County leadership, key County Board members, staff members, and the Environmental Committee should be targeted for presentations either oral or written about the program and the recommendations from the initial Study. These presentations or reports (depending on the audience) answer key questions and solicit support for the proposed changes in service and related activities. In all cases, this should be the first of several times throughout the development of an enhanced stormwater program and funding strategy that these key groups receive information regarding the proposed plan.

It is critical to involve the Board of Supervisors in a special meeting early in the process to provide information to and receive guidance from them regarding the stormwater program needs and challenges along with the kinds of funding mechanisms available, why and how they are used, and how stormwater management programs are being funded in other areas.

In addition, briefings for County leadership, impacted staff and other key stakeholders should occur prior to the briefing of the Board. These steps will ensure that all elements necessary to engage in a public discussion have been considered and addressed.

- Appointment of Citizen Advisory Committee for Stormwater

The Citizen Advisory Committee is an invaluable asset that will help the County get to the thoughts and feelings of the public regarding the program, the need for change, and funding options. It gives relevance to recommendations made by the staff (and eventually the Board of Supervisors) regarding funding strategies, levels of service and extent of service, and provides the opportunity to test reactions to rates and methods of billing.

This Committee is given a clearly defined advisory role. Upon completion of the initial work of the Committee, the Board will determine if they want this committee or another committee to continue to meet, to hear and to discuss issues regarding other elements of the stormwater program.

Role and Structure of the Committee	
Role of Committee	It is the mission of the Committee to review, through a structure process, policy and program structure for stormwater, with a final summary report prepared and presented to the Board of Supervisors. This is an "advisory" role and the Committee will not be responsible for making decisions that are the responsibility of the Board or staff.
Meeting Schedule	The first meeting of the Committee will be held on or about October 1, 2004 . The Committee will meet at least monthly and perhaps every three weeks when working on critical issues or program elements. It is the goal to have the Committee complete their work by February 2005.
Membership	The Board of Supervisors will appoint the Committee and it should be composed of 15 to 20 members . The following make-up of the Committee is recommended (suggested representatives are identified): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives of public facilities (school system, parks system) • Representatives of non-profit organizations • Representatives of business and industry (Chamber of Commerce, Realtors) • Representatives of environmental organizations/community (MWSP, EQAC) • Representatives of the builders/developers (NVBIA) • Representatives of homeowners associations/neighborhoods • Representatives of retail/merchants • Representatives of large potential rate payers.

GENERAL BACKGROUND ON ADVISORY COMMITTEES:

The first decision in establishing the committee is how the committee members would be appointed. Direct appointment by elected officials and direct appointment by staff have been successful methods for committee formation. The choice of political appointment or staff appointment is usually based on what has been the practice of the community in the past. The Board of Supervisors usually appoints Fairfax County's committees, so it is likely that the County would choose to have the Board appoint the Stormwater Advisory Committee.

It is worth noting that in cases where staff appoints an advisory committee, communities realize the potential for more flexibility. With this approach, the group would be managed by and would report to the County Executive or his designated representative rather than the elected body. Staff-appointed committees may offer less of a perception of "political" involvement and often present a clearer understanding of the "advisory" role anticipated. In addition, it usually requires less time to set up a committee appointed by staff.

The next decision in creating a Committee is "who" should serve. One approach is to identify organizational representation for the committee (i.e., home builders, environmental groups, community groups, educational groups, chamber of commerce, etc.) and allow the organizations chosen to participate to appoint their own member or members. This approach keeps staff from having to identify specific individuals to represent the interests of any one organization. A sample list of the kinds of groups that might be of interest is shown in Attachment #1.

Fairfax County's Stormwater Management Team has developed a list of major stakeholder groups, including many of the types of organizations and associations and government agencies represented by this generic list, and that should be a starting point to consider some nominees for this committee. As a beginning list, Committee members might be composed of a combination of the following: Board of Supervisors representatives, Apartment/Condominium interests, Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, Chamber of Commerce, Fairfax County Environmental Quality Advisory Council, League of Women Voters, and others from the list of interest to Fairfax County. It is also possible to invite Technical Staff Members to join the group, including the Northern Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District, Northern Virginia Regional Commission, and Fairfax County Water Authority.

It is critically important that a staff member be identified as the coordinator for Advisory Committee meetings and for communication with members. Having one person responsible ensures that the participants know who and how to contact staff for assistance.

Every meeting will be open to the public and meeting minutes will be developed. Materials prepared for discussion along with summaries of the position taken by the Committee will be available at each meeting, as appropriate. Their meeting notices and meeting minutes should be posted on the County's website to generate additional public and media interest in the comprehensive stormwater management program. Information and handouts addressing the items to be discussed should be presented to the stakeholders and made available to the media. The press might interview individual stakeholders. Special efforts to prepare members of the group for this possibility help keep the message consistent.

Upon adoption of an enhanced program of services, as some of the most knowledgeable citizens on the issue of stormwater, some or all of the members of the Citizens Advisory



Committee should be enlisted to help in the effort to explain the role of the program and funding strategy and to help communicate to the citizens the challenges of the County in addressing level of service issues as well as the rationale for the stormwater user-fee approach.

2. ON-GOING PHASE 1 ACTIVITIES:

The Phase continues through April 2005. Activities are focused on audiences that need to know more in-depth information about the program. . The audiences are mainly internal and “partner” groups including the Citizen Advisory Committee.

Communication tools are added during this phase continues to expand the details and depth of the materials that are produced, to devise new ways in which to highlight stormwater management issues, such as with the press, and to produce materials (presentations, reports, FAQ) useful to demonstrate the current status of the stormwater management program.

a. AUDIENCE

Board of Supervisors - Status reports (Not-In-Package [NIP] Items) regarding progress may be given to the Supervisors as milestones are reached. In addition, depending on the Board's preference, minutes of the Citizen Advisory Committee may be passed to the Supervisors for their information. At a minimum, these kinds of reports should be sent to the Supervisors at least quarterly throughout the process. A Report to the Board about progress should be made in late February 2005 or early March 2005.

Upon completion of the Advisory Committee's work, the Board may wish to discuss more informally some of the Committee's proposals at the Board Committee level and in a formal Board meeting when final recommendations come forward. Video of these special meetings dealing with the issue can be useful in carrying the discussion to other organizations and can be broadcast so that the County's residents can get a better idea of the process behind the program.

Some Board members may conduct special “town meetings” in their districts to discuss important issues that have worked effectively in other communities. Each Board member could have a meeting like this for their district. These can also be videotaped for use on the County's cable channel.

When discussions turn to funding, the County could hold a public meeting to discuss the finer points of user fees, enterprise funds, and so on. This activity could be incorporated into a Board meeting or special meeting. Explaining what funding methods were evaluated and how they function in support of local programs helps to clear up any questions about the dedication of the funding source. It also provides an opportunity for the Supervisors to assure their citizens that they are strongly aware of the issues and questions regarding the importance of stormwater management.

Throughout the process, the County should also attempt to keep a representative from each of the Supervisors' staffs informed, perhaps the staff person dealing with Environmental Issues or other related matters.



Internal Staff – Many staff members will be continuously engaged in the development of the program through review of committee materials, updated FAQs, development of organizational processes regarding customer service, inspections or other related activities. In addition, a monthly one-page summary of activities/status report should be sent to the County Executive and key staff to keep everyone informed of the status.

General Public - To address the future needs of stormwater communications, it is important to determine what the County residents currently know about stormwater and stormwater management programs. In-depth interviews will be conducted to get qualitative analysis of the current communications methods and effectiveness. In addition, up to 40 additional internal stakeholders and/or partner organizations will be given an email survey and asked to return it to an independent party for a quantitative analysis of the program's strengths, effectiveness, and needs. At the same time, results of reports, citizens committees, and past stakeholder and public involvement activities (i.e., 2002 the Chesapeake Bay Program survey) will be reviewed to help determine the current levels of public awareness of stormwater management and to identify issues of concern among the general public and the various stakeholder groups that properly could be addressed through public involvement. It may be possible in the early stages of the program planning to find an event (fair, festival, etc.) where a large number of citizens would gather and, with the help of a well-crafted short survey, gather responses from at least 100 or so attendees.

b. COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Internet Microsite- Perhaps the most useful and cost effective medium for conveying information about the Stormwater Program and funding strategy in Fairfax County during the Buildup phase is the County's website, (<http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/>). It is recommended that relevant information about stormwater and the County's funding strategy be gathered into a "microsite" within the current County domain so that citizens could access all stormwater related material from a single stormwater homepage (e.g. <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/stormwater>).

This site could contain a base of information to which all other forms of public notice about stormwater could refer. There are several pieces of information that could be placed on the microsite at this time and any number of items on the current County website that could be moved and categorized in a microsite: This is also one of the first and most obvious candidates for more visibility for the County's stormwater "identity" (see below).

- An FAQ about stormwater and why it is important to care about managing it.
- The County's VPDES Phase I application and comprehensive Stormwater Management Program along with the Annual Report.
- FAQ regarding the Stormwater Management Program
- Information on Watershed studies
- Updates on regulatory issues and initiatives to address them in Fairfax

The Stormwater Microsite should include an emailing address to a County employee contact that could respond to citizen's questions. These questions could also be added over time to the FAQ. Links to the nine individual County Board Members and Chairman's Office websites, to watershed groups, and to other environmental sites that may be of interest to the viewer can also be provided. As additional information becomes available, it is easily added to the site so that the Stormwater Microsite would always be the most accessible and up-to-date source of information on Stormwater in Fairfax.



The cost of operating the Stormwater Microsite would be negligible in terms of hardware and software, since the County already has a high quality website in use. The development and maintenance effort would entail several weeks of programming time for creation of the site plus one day per month for updates and modifications.

Identity Development - This involves the actions necessary to differentiate the stormwater service from other services provided by the County. Building one look for all the stormwater materials establishes quicker recognition for citizens who require assistance or information.. The actions taken in this regard will vary depending on County preference for differentiation. It may eventually involve letterhead, vehicle decals, uniforms, department status, etc. A decision on any symbols used to represent the Stormwater Program should be made early so that there is time to establish the identity in public awareness. The cost of this process largely overlaps with exiting costs for letterhead, vehicle painting, etc. Some design costs might be incurred initially if a professional graphic artist is required.

Continuing Materials Update – As milestones are reached, new information is gathered or significant decisions are made, the FAQs and other written and website materials continuously are updated appropriately. In addition, the County can develop fact sheets regarding program status that can be placed in public places and on the website, keeping citizens informed both prior to and following special meetings of the Board to give briefs on items of interest.

Public Information Officers Within the County, Cities, and Towns within Fairfax County Limits – Arrange to make a presentation to PIOs during their regular meeting, to start building a relationship with them regarding this program, and to ask for their assistance in rolling the program out around the County. Ensuring that they have effective information on the work underway in Fairfax will help reduce any misunderstanding of the role the County is undertaking regarding these services. If other jurisdictions desire to participate in a more regional effort, this is one information conduit that will support that effectively.

News Articles - Some news organizations allow, and even appreciate, the County providing materials about the program. These should be interesting stories about challenges in addressing flooded areas, the need for a new funding method, etc. The news media should be notified of important meetings (including the Citizen Advisory Committee meetings) and be granted interviews when requested. At least one press kit should be developed once the major policy decisions have been completed that give the press details of the planned implementation, along with fact sheets about the program.

Testimonials – Testimonials (e.g. help to a local homeowner) work well in conjunction with presentations and within news articles. They are most effective when the audience can identify with the speaker in some way. A good testimonial involves someone who is perceived to be honest and appropriately emotional, who is articulate when giving the story clearly and cogently, and who can demonstrate the value of the program in fixing their particular flooding problem.

County Festivals Street Fairs, Other Civil Events - Since the County already participates in local festivals and other civic events, fairs like *Celebrate Fairfax* and *Fall For Fairfax*, it would be easy to develop a table-top presentation or other materials to depict ways in which the public can participate in complying with clean water guidelines. The Stormwater Planning Division already has a display that may work for this purpose.





Speakers Bureau – It would be helpful if Fairfax County develops a proactive speakers' bureau of stormwater professionals (senior staff members) who will go into the community and discuss stormwater issues, needs, and potentially how a rate was developed with the general public. Speakers should be trained to present stormwater information and to address questions from the audience. Where it's possible, they could be paired with a member of the Citizen Advisory Committee. All presenters should be trained and have one or two "canned" presentations that can be used with public groups.

There are many stakeholder groups who can be influential in the positive reception of an expanded stormwater program and funding strategy such as a utility if they are informed and understand the need, the way in which the user-fee is calculated, and the fee structure. It is especially useful to find a number of planned meetings in which the stormwater management story can be told; in this way, it reaches people at the places they would normally be attending and gives the stormwater management speakers a built-in audience. In these meetings it is important to demonstrate recognition of opinion leaders' positions and influence, to listen to their concerns, if possible solicit their support, and to respond quickly to questions that cannot be answered on the spot but require follow up. It is important to target presentation to include representatives of the major ratepayers, churches, public sector, and press.

The cost associated with news articles, testimonials, and individual meetings could be substantial in terms of staff time, but this effort would be dispersed over a number of employees or other contracted staff.

B. PHASE 2 – PROGRAM ADOPTION AND YEAR ONE IMPLEMENTATION

On the current schedule, Phase 2 begins in April through FY 2006. This Phase is dedicated to making the audiences aware that a change in stormwater services and funding will be coming and developing an understanding of how services will evolve over time, with more consistent and stable funding for the stormwater management program. If the Board of Supervisors adopts a new funding approach, implementing a stormwater utility, the "public" of interest during this Phase is all ratepayers, including residents, property owners, and business owners. The goal is to educate them about service changes and the new fees they are going to pay. The message must be communicated effectively, often one-on-one, and consistently. There must be a phone line for the public staffed by people that are knowledgeable and who can answer basic questions. There also must be technical personnel who can handle referred questions about the stormwater financial credits, fee management policies, rate structure, fee calculations and the bill amount. Most importantly, it is important to demonstrate that the enhanced stormwater program is active and effective.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS:

Because the County is physically large and requires specific communications tools to address the centers where people gather, so the Communications Plan also addresses how and where face-to-face communications and general communications should take place.



Informational Brochure(s) - These brochures are designed to give a simple explanation of the program, why it is necessary, and what better stormwater management will accomplish. It should be developed to answer the most common questions asked by a large number of people yet kept non-technical. There may be several brochures that target different information (general information, answer questions on billing, how to get a complaint addressed, maintenance policies and responsibilities, etc.)

In addition, a list of planned capital improvements along with a projected schedule for construction has proven to be very successful. Such a brochure would also be helpful for Fairfax given the focus of the program on the construction of numerous smaller capital and remedial maintenance projects. It should also link the Watershed Planning initiatives to the Capital Improvement Program, with targeted materials for each geographic area, if possible.

This brochure(s) should be matched with a planned and prepared set of previously contracted capital improvements, which could be ready to break ground the day the first bills go out. These projects should be managed so that the media's coverage of the program is about progress in fixing long-standing problems and not about a new fee or charge.

Brochures and fact sheets may also be scheduled for production through the County's VPDES Phase I Program. Linking messages of water quality protection with an enhanced service capability is important. Coordination of these messages should be taken care of by communication staff in the Stormwater Planning Division.

Video-enabled Slide Presentation – A video presentation based on slides with a recorded script is an effective tool to explain the role of a Utility in funding Stormwater improvements and the impact of the Utility on ratepayers. This is useful as an adjunct to meetings with stakeholders and the press as well as County employees. With the County's already appreciable ability to produce videos, these same presentations could be video-based entirely. There is considerable footage available to provide background materials for the presentation.

Bill Stuffer- Regular bill mailings represent an economical vehicle for information dissemination. If a bill stuffer is to be used, the first one communicates the overall change in stormwater management, what programs are being initiated, and the priority of the effort. It explains that a bill will be sent in the future to pay for the program, and provides a point of contact for additional information. The second bill stuffer's purpose is to explain the residential rate structure, calling attention to specific planned projects and announcing that the next cycle's bill will include the stormwater management user fee. This technique has to be carefully coordinated with the designated stormwater-billing agent.

Customer Service - The mailing of a stormwater bill usually generates some inquiries and complaints. These communications will likely be fielded by several entities in the County, including Board of Supervisors' offices, County operational divisions, the County Office of Public Affairs, and the County billing entity (tax office, FCWA, other). Having a well-conceived and responsive customer service capability, which rapidly and effectively responds to these calls, is perhaps one of the best public relations options available. There will be a number of complaints that can be handled relatively easily by a trained customer service representative (even a temporary position for the first few months of billing). However, the County personnel should be available to handle more complex calls or particular important callers.



C. PHASE 3 – ON-GOING COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

The second and all subsequent years of the expanded, enhanced stormwater program requires continued communication with various stakeholders as well as the general public. An update on the progress made should be provided during each budget cycle for the Board of Supervisors as well as the general public. There should be consistent information on policies, a customer service attitude to the responses, and satisfying answers to most questions. The County staff should specifically focus communication on success of the enhanced investment in stormwater, using performance measures and project summaries to ensure continued support for the expanded activities. It will take many years to build a comprehensive program that can be absorbed into routine operations. The County leadership as well as the general public will need consistent, responsive information to sustain the program development.

During this period, the messages concern improvements in infrastructure, flooding, and water quality achieved as a result of the Stormwater Management Program. The focus is on giving those efforts maximum exposure. Progress on activities addressing the Chesapeake Bay and other key programs should be part of the on-going communications efforts. Measuring change is important so that the public understands the commitment undertaken by the County in improving overall quality of life in Fairfax.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITIES AND MATERIALS FOR THIS PHASE:

School Programs- A long-term program for educating elementary school children about Stormwater would be a cost-effective way to build permanent community support for efforts to improve water quality. It might also be possible to incorporate some elements of water quality from this into the current “Investigation in Environmental Science” curriculum that is being used for the VPDES Phase I activities (and as part of the State’s Standards of Learning). This already reaches 12,000 7th graders in the Fairfax county Public School System. It might also be part of the current 9th grade Ecology curriculum that is reaching another 10,000 students. These programs are highly effective at changing the next generation’s habits and also at reaching the families of the students. The costs will not be excessive but will require the cooperation of the Science Coordinator at each elementary school in the County. Such a program is currently being done through the County’s VPDES Phase I program but could be used for both purposes. It may also be possible for the County to provide some credits to the school system for continuing its educational efforts regarding clean water.

Television and Radio Public Service Announcements – Once the stormwater funding would be in place, adding television and radio public service announcements to the mix could be quite effective. This is perhaps the best venue to provide information to citizens about particular ways they can help in water quality efforts. Some of Fairfax County’s priorities for education about oil and gasoline, fertilizers, etc. would lend themselves very well to these kinds of announcements.

County Service – Many communities now buy water-saving and conservation “tools” in bulk and provide them at low cost to citizens. For example, it would be possible to purchase a number of rain barrels and provide them on a first-come-first served basis to citizens. Some communities provide toilet and tap conservation tools through libraries and other local means on a large-scale basis to citizens.





In-house communication- The County could use training programs for employees and use internal newsletters to target messages about Stormwater. At least one such training session and/or employee newsletter should occur prior to sending the first bill.



Attachment #1 - Stakeholder Checklist

Organization or Interest	Recommendation
Chamber of Commerce	
Merchants Association	
Major Industry	
Public Schools	
Schools of High Education	
Engineering Department	
Biology/Geology Department	
Environmental Programs	
Community Groups	
Garden Council Environmental Program	
Beautification Organization	
Parks and Recreation Supporters	
Churches	
Civic Groups	
4-H Leadership	
Service Clubs	
Neighborhood Associations	
Homeowners Associations	
Real Estate Organizations	
Apartment Management Association	
Realtors Association	
Development Community	
Home Builders Association	
Developers Association	
General Contractors	
Governments	
County	
Adjacent Communities	
State Agencies	
Federal Agencies	
Professional Associations	
Engineers Association	
Landscapers/Nursery Associations	
Environmental Groups	
Sierra Club	
Local Focus Clubs	
Agricultural Groups	

This list is generic in nature and should be used to identify key community interests that should be involved in the program development for stormwater.



APPENDIX V

EXISTING DOCUMENT SUMMARY

Over the course of the last 12 years, the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services has considered the financial, programmatic, and public education policy aspects of the development and implementation of a dedicated funding mechanism for the County's stormwater management program. This report provides a comprehensive review of applicable background documentation on the County's past stormwater funding studies and identifies gaps and hurdles to previous implementation efforts. The documents examined in this report include a series of stormwater utility feasibility studies conducted in-house by the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services in the early and mid-1990s, as well as several utility and comprehensive stormwater management program development studies completed with consultant assistance in the late 1990s and 2000. A list of the documents examined is included in the Appendix.

A. INITIAL STUDY, JULY 1992

In July 1992, Fairfax County's Department of Public Works and Environmental Services began to assess the need for a stable, defensible, equitable, and adequate funding source for the County's stormwater management program. The 1992 study noted the need to provide stable stormwater management program funding for a number of reasons that remain true today. Competing for funding for stormwater programming through the General Fund was difficult due to a recessed economic climate. The County was planning stormwater budget cuts for FY 1993. In addition, the Department report recognized the County's bonding limitations, both from a financial standpoint and from a citizen tolerance standpoint. Even with the County's recent implementation of its Pro Rata Share Program, which collects funding from developers for use in mitigating future drainage problems from new development, DPWES acknowledged a financial shortfall in programming capability.

The County also faced the need to implement state and federally mandated water quality regulations such as the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) water quality regulations of the Clean Water Act and Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act. The County recognized the need to continue to implement water quality best management practices (BMPs); to invest in infrastructure maintenance, repair, and replacement; and to address other capital improvement needs such as streambank stabilization and regional pond construction.

The County's 1992 study examined two different stormwater utility fee program alternatives. The first option was developed exclusively for stormwater management programming dealing with water quality concerns, a relatively new concept in stormwater management at the time in Fairfax County and in Virginia. This first utility fee option would fund the construction of regional detention ponds, streambank stabilization, and the maintenance of detention and other BMP facilities. The intent of the first option was to provide funding for water quality improvements needed to meet state and federal requirements while leaving more traditional stormwater management needs, such as





conveyance maintenance, to be funded via the General Fund, Pro Rata funding, and bonds.

Expenditure projections under this first utility fee scenario were developed for a 10-year planning window and included capital costs for construction of regional BMPs and streambank stabilization projects, maintenance of existing facilities, maintenance for those facilities projected to be constructed, and stream erosion mitigation projects for severely degraded streams. Projected revenues were determined using an Equivalent Residential Unit (ERU) rate methodology and an ERU calculation of 2,500 square feet of impervious cover for the average detached, single family home in Fairfax County. The Department estimated a flat rate of \$1.15 per ERU for 10 years on approximately 521,000 ERUs (which accounts for credits) would generate sufficient revenue, roughly \$72 million over 10 years, to fund the program elements described above.

The second examined option was designed to provide revenues for the planning, design, construction and maintenance of all public drainage needs, including stormwater quality, quantity, and conveyance facilities. In this second scenario, capital projects would be implemented in accordance with the following Board of Supervisors established policy for prioritizing drainage projects:

1. Achieve state and federally mandated stormwater programs
2. Alleviate structures from flooding
3. Alleviate severe bank and channel erosion
4. Alleviate minor bank and channel erosion
5. Alleviate yard flooding
6. Alleviate street flooding

The projected expenditures for the second alternative totaled roughly \$114 million over the 10 year planning window. The revenue estimate was constructed using the same formula as was used in the first scenario, though the number of ERUs changed without explanation. Using an ERU, of roughly 546,000, accounting for credits, the Department estimated that a rate of \$1.70 per ERU over 10 years would generate the necessary funding for this program.

The 1992 study recommended the inclusion of a credit program to provide a partial reduction in utility fees for property owners that maintain private stormwater management BMPs. Property owners would be required to apply for credit. In addition, the granting of a fee credit would be contingent upon the facility having been designed and constructed in accordance with criteria outlined in the County's Public Facilities Manual. Private maintenance agreements would also be required for receipt of a fee credit.

The 1992 study also covered the available billing options for the stormwater utility fee. Three alternatives were considered: adding the stormwater fee to the existing water/sewer bill; adding the stormwater fee to the property tax bill; and creation of a new, stormwater-only billing system. The study highlighted pros and cons of each alternative as follows.



<u>Mechanism</u>	<u>Pros</u>	<u>Cons</u>
<i>Add on to Utility Bill</i>	Helps establish the idea of SW as a “utility” function and fee, not a tax.	Confusion between sewer and stormwater control charges; Not all developed parcels are included in the County’s three separate billing systems; High potential administrative costs*.
<i>Add on to Tax Bill</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Necessary data for determining SWU fees available for most parcels already contained in Real Estate Assessment database. • Better success rate for collection. 	Easier to perceive the new SWU fee as a tax.
<i>Stand-alone SW Bill</i>	More flexibility in establishment of SWU billing system	Expensive to create and maintain.

*Billing system at the time charged a flat fee of \$3.25 per bill to cover the administrative costs associated with adding additional collections.

The study recommended the use of the County property tax bill as it appeared to be the most expedient option to initiate and the least expensive to operate.

Finally, the 1992 study discussed the need for public information and participation in establishing a stormwater utility fee system. The study recognized the need for an equitable, defensible program, and highlights the need for a public information program to be developed prior to billing. Recommended strategies included the dissemination of written materials along with informational meetings for citizen groups, industry, and other interested organizations prior to the implementation of the stormwater utility.

ANALYSIS

The 1992 study covered each of the basic building blocks of stormwater utility development to some degree, discussing programming options, rate methodology, billing and collections, crediting, and public information dissemination. The study also highlighted the basic rationale for moving to utility funding for the County’s stormwater management program, the need for stable, adequate, equitable, and flexible funding. The 1992 study’s program definition and revenue and expenditure estimates used broad estimates of land cover based on land uses, rather than a more detailed methodology such as use of aerial photography or GIS-generated impervious cover, to estimate the total ERUs available for billing. There is also an inconsistency in the number of ERUs estimated depending on which of the study’s two alternatives are being examined that is not explained in the report. However, one of the most critical pieces to the utility development process that is missing from this report is the need to involve the public during the development of a stormwater utility fee system in Fairfax County, not just educate them at the end.



B. FOLLOW-UP STUDY, MARCH 1994

Following the initial study completed in 1992, the Fairfax County Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, at the direction of the Board of Supervisors, conducted a series of briefings for citizen groups, the business community, and other interested organizations to get reaction to the initial feasibility study work. While many viewed the stormwater utility concept favorably, County staff noted the differing comments received by many groups and the difficulty in revising the initial study to reach consensus on what should be funded through the stormwater utility and what programming should be included. In March 1994, Public Works staff revised the initial stormwater utility feasibility study to craft a single program proposal for consideration.

The 1994 report included a preliminary review of the County's needs and resources for stormwater controls, noting a projected \$300 million capital and maintenance need for water quality improvement facilities and major drainage improvement projects over the next 30 years. That need, coupled with meeting state and federal water quality mandates, was estimated to cost \$11.5 million per year over the 10 year planning period.

The 1994 report sets out a single utility funded program alternative, as opposed to the two alternatives proposed in 1992. In the 1994 revision, the utility would provide funding for planning, design, construction, and maintenance of the stormwater conveyance systems stormwater detention ponds, BMPs, streambank stabilization, and major drainage improvements needed to solve structural flooding of homes and businesses and severe streambank erosion problems. It would also fund the improvements needed to meet state and federally mandated water quality goals. It would not fund minor drainage needs (storm sewer conveyance systems and projects to eliminate yard flooding). The 1994 report also notes that future revenues from storm water bond referenda were expected to be reduced or eliminated upon utility fee implementation.

Expenditure categories included capital construction, maintenance and inspections, research and monitoring, and administration (including billing). The projected expenditures totaled approximately \$115 million over 10 years, including a \$640,000 development expense pay back. Capital projects would be completed using the same prioritization plan from the 1992 study:

1. Achieve state and federally mandated stormwater programs
2. Alleviate structures from flooding
3. Alleviate severe bank and channel erosion
4. Alleviate minor bank and channel erosion
5. Alleviate yard flooding
6. Alleviate street flooding

However, only projects in categories 1, 2, or 3 from the list above would be funded through the stormwater utility. Category 4, 5, and 6 projects would be funded through other means, including the General Fund.

The 1994 report provides a much more in-depth discussion of fee credits. While the County recognized that it would be prohibitively expensive to take over maintenance of all private stormwater management structures and BMPs, the County also recognized that those private structures do provide some level of stormwater impact mitigation



depending on design and use. The report recommends the use of utility fee credits to recognize those benefits.

Utilizing the same 2,500 square foot ERU assumption and using updated County statistics on land use, the 1994 report demonstrated a total of roughly 584,000 ERUs in the County. Adjusted for credits, the total number of ERUs for rate revenue analysis was calculated at approximately 536,000. Given that total and the expenditure expectations for the level of programming proposed, a rate of \$1.75 per ERU would generate \$118 million in the 10 year planning cycle.

The 1994 study offered almost identical analysis of billing and collection options as that offered in the 1992 report. The 1994 report reiterated the earlier recommendation to utilize the real estate tax bill as the initial billing mechanism, though the report did indicate a potential snag based on the fact that the current (at that time) property tax computer billing system was operating at total capacity and may not be able to accommodate the additional line item right away.

Finally, the 1994 report offered a two-year time frame for the development of the stormwater utility. In the first year, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services proposed conducting a study to better determine the average impervious cover on a single family residential parcel through a representative sampling of properties. In addition, the Department would establish criteria for a fee credit program for those landowners who maintain their own stormwater control facilities and then present all findings to the Board of Supervisors. Upon approval from the Board, the Department would engage in the year two work plan. The second year work plan included determining parcel fee amounts with the assistance of a consultant, establishment of a billing system, preparation and execution of a public information program, and preparation and public hearings for the utility ordinance. Developmental costs for the second year were anticipated at \$640,000, which could be recovered once the utility billing began.

ANALYSIS

While the 1994 study continued to address the central tenets of stormwater utility fee system development – program, rate methodology and rate base, billing and collection, and public input and involvement – several assumptions and factors require further consideration. By developing a program vision that did not include utility funding for more routine, minor drainage issues, the County would have had to establish its public information campaign very early in the process to educate its citizenry on what utility funds were providing in the way of projects. Without funding smaller, more localized projects, the County may have risked a utility “identity” problem without significant public outreach investment.

Secondly, by making the statement that stormwater bonding may no longer be necessary, the County basically states a position of “pay-as-you-go” for all large capital expenditures. As such, major infrastructure construction or replacement would only be done after the utility had built enough of a cash reserve to pay for the project. Building that much cash reserve may have inhibited the utility’s ability to provide other services, which could lead to increased backlogs and public perception problems. The report does not contain significant analysis of major capital replacement needs, which can offer major financial challenges without a policy decision to utilize bonding as a potential funding alternative.



Finally, while the report emphasizes the need for public meetings and outreach, the public component of the utility development process is not clearly spelled out and leads the reader to believe that the public component comes once the utility has been established rather than as the policies are being established and evaluated.

C. 1997 CAMP, DRESSER & MCKEE DRAFT STORMWATER UTILITY USER FEE REPORT

Following the first two stormwater utility feasibility studies conducted in house by the Fairfax County Department of Public Works, the County retained Camp, Dresser & McKee (CDM) to further refine the initial work and develop a more detailed stormwater utility feasibility study.

Similar to the prior studies conducted by the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, the CDM report acknowledges the County's need for a stable, adequate, equitable, and flexible funding source for its stormwater management program. The CDM analysis includes only the unincorporated portions of the County (thus excluding cities and towns) and notes that a stormwater utility can enhance the current stormwater physical features by producing adequate and dedicated revenue to cover the cost of operation, maintenance, *and replacement, if necessary*, of those features, while providing future revenue to construct other capital improvements as needed.

The CDM report's account of the County's current level of stormwater service is consistent with the prior studies, noting operation and maintenance of storm drainage systems, BMPs, flood control structures, inspection and monitoring, testing, planning, research, and public education.

The CDM analysis included preliminary stormwater control program expenditures for an eight-year planning window running from FY 2001 through FY 2008. CDM developed three different expenditure scenarios to reflect three different levels of service, including a minimum needs level (Scenario A), a mid-range needs level (Scenario B), and a level of service that addresses needs on an accelerated basis (Scenario C). The average annual stormwater utility revenues over the first eight years of the program were estimated at \$12.9 million for Scenario A, \$19.2 million for Scenario B, and \$24.3 million for Scenario C.

The CDM report also explored the development of the utility rate structure and policy in much greater depth than had been pursued previously. Rather than relying on a single base unit, the ERU, the CDM analysis introduced the Single Family Unit (SFU) concept to the analysis. The ERU was investigated, but dismissed as it is based on an average imperviousness from all residential categories. The CDM analysis demonstrated that the variability in the average imperviousness from all residential categories was considered too wide to use the ERU. The SFU was established based on a statistical analysis of a sample set of the single family detached residential categories throughout the County. The parcel analysis of the County Assessor's database identified a total of 312,159 individual parcels in Fairfax County. A percentage of each of the residential parcel categories shown below was sampled to establish the SFU. The average impervious area of the single family detached parcel was determined to be 3,398 square feet, which



was established as the SFU. This base unit was used to develop a series of residential categories as follows:

Residential Category	Average Ft ² Impervious	Total # of Parcels	Sample Size (# of Parcels)	% of Total Res. Parcels	SFU Value
Tier I SF detached	1,849	174,015*	300*	62*	0.54
Tier II SF detached	3,398				1.00
Tier III SF detached	5,626				1.66
Tier IV SF detached	10,982				3.20
Townhouse	1,968	67,964	200	26	0.58
Apartment	807	3,144	120	1	0.24
Condominiums	962	Not listed	120	13	0.28
Mobile Home	2,256	17	8	>1	0.66

* total parcel number, sample size, and percentage of residential parcel statistics apply to all single family detached residential parcels.

Developed residential parcels accounted for 91 percent of all parcels and 32 percent of the total impervious area. Non-residential parcels, including undeveloped lands, made up 9 percent of the parcels, but account for 68 percent of the total impervious area in the County. These statistics do not include paved roads. Like the prior analysis, non-residential parcel charges would be based on their total impervious area divided by the SFU value of 3,398 square feet.

Based on CDM's analysis, the total number of SFUs available for billing equals roughly 454,700. This SFU number excludes federal, state, and county government properties, which were assumed to have a full waiver of the utility fee. As for the preferred billing mechanism, CDM's report recommends adding the stormwater utility fee charge as a new line item on the Fairfax County Water Authority's utility bill. It should be noted that the real estate tax bill had been the recommended billing mechanism in the two previous studies.

Much like the two prior studies, the CDM analysis also develops alternatives for the implementation of a credit policy. Based on CDM's analysis of the credit eligible impervious areas, the credit policy will reduce the total number of SFUs available for billing by 12 percent, necessitating an increase of approximately 13 percent in the user fee to account for the difference.

Projected future program expenditures were used to develop the rate ranges needed to provide necessary revenue to meet each of the three different programming conditions noted above, as follows:

Programming Scenario	Annual Fee Range	Monthly SFU charge
A – minimum needs	\$25 to \$27	\$2.08 to \$2.25
B – mid-level needs	\$38 to \$40	\$3.16 to \$3.33
C – all needs	\$48 to \$51	\$4.00 to \$4.25

The CDM study concluded with an itinerary of next steps towards the development of the County's stormwater utility, including the development of the billing accounts, verification of impervious area, matching parcels to utility accounts, field verification of some accounts, credit adjustment policy development, integration of the billing system, and general coordination and administration.



ANALYSIS

The 1997 CDM Draft Report explores the development and implementation of a stormwater utility service charge in greater detail than any of the previous studies, particularly with regard to County parcel analysis, rate structure, and rate methodology. However, as in previous studies, the 1997 report does not make significant mention of the need to engage the public in the process at some level prior to development of the program.

The rate structure developed in the 1997 analysis offers a more equitable distribution of fees, based on sampled conditions from a variety of different residential parcels throughout the County, than did prior analysis. However, the multi-tiered, multi-categorical residential rate methodology is more complex than a single, flat residential rate structure. As such, clear and effective education of the public and the Board of Supervisors becomes that much more critical. In addition, this educational effort would have needed to take place prior to the implementation of the program, rather than after the program has already been put in place.

D. STORMWATER UTILITY ADVISORY GROUP (SUAG) REPORT, DECEMBER 1998

In response to direction given by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors in August 1996, County staff, in conjunction with the County's consultant, Camp, Dresser & McKee (CDM) coordinated and seated a Stormwater Utility Advisory Group (SUAG). The SUAG was comprised of representatives from industry, business, environmental organizations, citizens, and other interested constituents to provide input and assist staff in developing criteria, methodology, and policies for the County's stormwater management program. The SUAG, which was expanded in 1998 to include civic organization representatives, met nine times from November 1996 through September 1998 and developed position papers on a number of key programmatic issues.

As in previous studies, this report notes the need to develop a dedicated and equitable funding source for the County's stormwater management program. The report references a \$300 million capital project backlog of stormwater management obligations as well as a very substantial accumulation of maintenance deficiencies and infrastructure retrofits as a result of continuous under funding for several years.

The SUAG developed a series of specific recommendations for the County's stormwater utility program. The SUAG recommended that a uniform service charge system be developed and applied to all areas of the County. The recommended fee structure was a tiered system that required larger single-family detached homes to pay a higher fee than the fee required of condominium and townhouse owners. Non-residential property would be charged according to the actual amount of impervious surface on the property. The rate structure discussed and recommended was the same rate structure developed by CDM for the previous study, with several minor adjustments as demonstrated below:



Residential Category	Range of Ft ² Impervious	Average Ft ² Impervious	Percentile	SFU Value
Single Family, Estate	>7,597	10,982	Upper 5%	3.23
Single Family, Large	5,314 to 7,597	5,626	90 to 95 th	1.66
Single Family, Average	2,094 to 5,314	3,398	10 to 90 th	1.00
Single Family, Small	<2,094	1,849	Lower 10%	0.54
Mobile Homes	N/A	2,256	N/A	0.66
Townhouses	N/A	1,968	N/A	0.58
Condominiums & Apartments	N/A	875	N/A	0.26*
Non-Residential	N/A	Actual	N/A	Actual

* SUAG recommended that condominiums @ 0.28 SFUs and apartments @ 0.24 SFUs be combined to 0.26 SFUs.

The recommended service charge brought forth by the SUAG was \$57 per year per average single family house, which equates to Scenario C as prepared in the prior CDM study. This rate was projected to generate approximately \$24.3 million per year to provide for project implementation, a proactive maintenance program, preparation of watershed facility plans, infrastructure replacement, and other needs to greatly reduce stormwater pollution and enhance the quality of life in Fairfax County.

Additional SUAG recommendations included the deletion of privately owned roads and travel ways from measurements of impervious area. The report explains that in the determination of a tiered residential fee structure based on the average imperviousness of a “single-family unit” (SFU), most jurisdictions measure all impervious surfaces on private property including the privately owned travel ways, which are frequently found on multi-family developments. However, the equivalent roadway imperviousness serving single-family units are in public rights-of-way, legally exempt from stormwater service charges, and therefore cannot be measured in the SFU fee rate determination process. The SUAG subsequently recommended that the County not measure impervious surfaces associated with private roads and travel ways on multi-family residential, townhouse and mobile home park properties for the purpose of determining the SFU fee rate. This specific issue also led the SUAG to recommend that changes to the Virginia stormwater utility enabling legislation be executed in order to address this inequity.

The SUAG recommended the adoption of a credit policy that recognizes the value of privately owned and maintained stormwater management infrastructure and BMPs. The SUAG’s recommendations are largely identical to those examined in the previous CDM study. However, the SUAG also recommended that private facility owners have the option of petitioning the County for public maintenance of those facilities provided certain criteria are met. The SUAG also echoed the 1997 CDM report recommendation that the County add the stormwater utility fee charge to the Fairfax County Water Authority’s utility bill as an additional line item.

Finally, the SUAG recommended that the County proceed with the second phase of utility implementation, which centered on the development of the determination of the impervious surface for each parcel in the County.

ANALYSIS

The development and use of a citizen/stakeholder advisory committee demonstrates the County’s recognition of the need to engage the constituents of the stormwater management program early in the utility development process. The selected committee



represented a broad cross-section of the County's constituents. During the course of this committee's work, several additions were made to provide civic association representation. The report notes that the SUAG's recommendations represented the overall "consensus" of the committee but that the Fairfax County Chamber of Commerce preliminarily opposed the stormwater service charge program adoption. The Chamber was still evaluating the merits of the program and the report noted that the Chamber would make its official position known to the Board of Supervisors before or at a public hearing for adoption of a stormwater service charge program ordinance.

While it can be difficult to facilitate true consensus on the details of a stormwater utility program, overall "informed consent" from those constituencies represented on the committee is an important factor in successfully presenting the program to the Board of Supervisors and to implementation of the program. By allowing one constituent to make its position known to the Board independent of the advisory committee, the County runs the risk of that constituent announcing an adverse position in a public forum. A more desirable result would be to have opposing positions presented as part of the SUAG report, so that the County decision makers have all information available simultaneously.

E. CONCEPTUAL PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, CAMP, DRESSER & MCKEE, MARCH 2000

Following the 1998 SUAG report, Fairfax County's consultant, CDM, completed an assessment designed to frame a "vision" for a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Program for Fairfax County, describing the County's stormwater management needs and a roadmap for how to meet those needs. The 2000 report noted several key factors in the current state of the County's stormwater management program, namely that the County's program is largely reactive, driven mostly by citizen complaints and state and federal mandate compliance. As County funding for stormwater management programming had remained flat or been cut over the last 10 years, maintenance and capital projects have been deferred. The 2000 report noted that deferral of maintenance and capital projects has the potential to require even more expensive remedies down the road. Approximately 400 of the 600 capital projects identified by the County had been on the unfunded capital backlog for over 20 years. CDM estimated that the total capital backlog was \$300 million.

The 2000 CDM report also recognized the need to establish a community education program to make the citizens of Fairfax County more aware of the connection between proactive stormwater management programming, including regular stormwater maintenance activities, and quality of life in the County. The report noted that a proactive maintenance program would increase the public visibility of the stormwater program and would increase the number of residents who directly benefit from maintenance activities.

The 2000 report laid out the framework for a County comprehensive stormwater management program, noting the County's current "top down" stormwater management approach, and recommended a bottom up approach comprised of six elements. The recommended program relies on what the report referred to as a proactive approach driven by a "Stewardship Vision." The recommended elements are listed below.



1. Stewardship Vision Drives Comprehensive Stormwater Program
↓
2. Master Planning (Capital Projects, Stream Protection, and Maintenance)
↓
3. Proactive Capital Projects Program (Watershed based)
↓
4. Proactive System Maintenance Program (including Proactive Infrastructure Replacement)
↓
5. Stream Restoration Program
↓
6. Monitoring Program

The stewardship vision centered on the County's need to develop a new public education initiative that provides an illustration of how a comprehensive stormwater management program can support the broader County environmental resource stewardship vision and improve quality of life. The master planning component included the development of watershed plans to project build out conditions in major watershed, implementation of a stream protection master plan that builds on the County's Stream Protection Strategy (SPS), and a maintenance program master plan, for both the near term and long term. Proactive capital projects should have resulted from the watershed improvements master plan and recommend a phased CIP approach for each watershed and a CIP ranking system. The County should have transitioned to the recommended maintenance program as soon as funding is available so as to have an immediate, visible impact. Another visible impact would have been the implementation of a stream restoration program for heavily impacted streams in urban areas. Finally, the County should include a monitoring program that allows for evaluation of progress.

The 2000 CDM report continued to discuss the County's need for dedicated funding of the program. Public education was highlighted as a key element, not only for the conceptual stormwater management program, but also for its benefits in developing and implementing a funding option. The report highlighted the benefits of what is now referred to as the stormwater environmental utility fee. The report's fiscal needs projection for the implementation of the conceptual program included several activities:

- Master plans/Stormwater Management studies
- Billing system/Administration
- Maintenance programming
- Capital projects
- Pro-rata Share Program

The report noted the need for \$25 to \$30 million dollars each year over a five year planning window to implement the recommended approach, with maintenance and capital project implementation accounting for the majority of expected expenditures. These figures include costs associated with development of the County stormwater environmental utility fee program. To generate the necessary revenue, the report noted a need for the monthly SFU fee to start at \$4.25 in FY 2002 and increase in steps to \$4.75 per SFU by FY 2006, based upon the future SFU projections contained in prior CDM reports. Of particular note, the 2000 CDM report recommended that the SUAG





suggestion regarding the exclusion of private travelways from the impervious calculations be changed to include these impervious areas.

ANALYSIS

The 2000 CDM report examines the County stormwater management programming needs in greater detail than its previous reports, concentrating the discussion more on implementation strategies and necessary studies than on funding. The report lays out a strategy that places necessary emphasis on the development of more visibility for the County stormwater management program and focuses attention on projects that can provide the visibility that the program has lacked over its history. The report notes the need for remedial maintenance, and acknowledges that regular maintenance must be performed in order to avoid larger maintenance expenses in the future. Master planning, as documented in this report, is an extremely powerful tool for use in the development of a more proactive stormwater program, and the report presents a viable strategy for the development of necessary master planning tools.

To implement the funding strategy, the report notes the need to finalize the SUAG report that was drafted in 1998. According to later documentation, the SUAG recommendations were presented to the Board of Supervisors for consideration in December 1998. Since then, the County has continued to change, develop, and redevelop. The consensus reached in the first SUAG process may be outdated and needs to be revisited in order to make its conclusions viable.

F. 2003 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BUSINESS AREA ENVIRONMENTAL SCAN

In 2003, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services, with assistance from AMEC Earth & Environmental, Inc. (AMEC), conducted an Environmental Scan of the stormwater business area (STW) to promote future-oriented thinking in both the management and staff and as background to their strategic planning effort. This report was intended to provide management and staff with a "snapshot" of external and internal trends so that the STW could proactively address critical issues. The organization's direct and indirect stakeholders, e.g. employees, stakeholders, political leaders, and other interested parties were surveyed to provide information regarding the internal environment.

This report divided the information about the external environment into a separate category from the internal business of running the stormwater program. The external environment considered the macro environment, including social, technological, economic, environmental and political facts and trends that affect the future of the stormwater program in Fairfax County. Some of the external factors investigated were the economic circumstances in the County, regulatory data, demographics, infrastructure data, environmental data, public perception and citizen expectations, and other unplanned external factors.

Internal environmental factors include the County's own goals for stormwater management, available implementation mechanisms, organizational structure, programming, revenue sources, resource allocation in terms of both funding and staff resources, public outreach, and the internal organizational climate.



Presented below are conclusions that were drawn from the Environmental Scan.

- 1) External demands will continue to drive the majority of initiatives in the STW. That is, agencies outside of the STW (Federal, State, and County) will largely drive internal programming. This does not diminish the importance of short- or long-range planning; however, it does mean that planning for discretionary programming must be more strongly focused.
- 2) Fairfax County's existing tax base is not likely to increase appreciably in the short term. It is unclear how a shift from new development to infill/redevelopment will ultimately affect the County's revenue generating capacity. Therefore competition with other County programs will remain high, unless new sources of funding are identified.
- 3) There will always be more work/programs than can be accomplished by the STW. Therefore, the STW will need to think strategically about which projects or programs it will undertake in order to maintain acceptable standards of quality.
- 4) The STW's human resources have become overstressed due to taking on additional regulatory and planning functions (TMDLs, Chesapeake Bay, Regional Ponds, etc.), as well as maintaining an increasing facilities inventory without a corresponding increase in staff. The STW needs to benchmark the optimal staff necessary to achieve STW goals and find ways to increase and decrease staffing without jeopardizing programming.
- 5) Inconsistent public outreach efforts have led to misinterpretation or a lack of understanding of the STW mission and successes. A consistent program highlighting achievements and progress will bring the public to a better understanding of the need for stormwater programs.
- 6) Despite recent organizational and leadership changes in the STW and DPWES, it will be a long-term endeavor to shed old perceptions about how business is done. As a result, there will be continued confusion as to the STW's direction and mission. A consistent internal communications process within the STW is key to gaining staff-level trust in the organization's leadership.
- 7) Momentum caused by high-profile STW-related regulatory mandates, recent reports by the STW demonstrating the impacts of growth on water and ecological resources, and a generally friendly political environment towards stormwater issues can be used by the STW to enhance existing programming.

The Environmental Scan set the premise for the development of the STW Strategic Plan, which is summarized in the next section.

ANALYSIS

The Environmental Scan highlighted many of the themes that have been established relating to the Fairfax County stormwater management program in prior reports. External factors were cited as driving a great deal of the County's stormwater management programming. It also noted that resources are scarce and the needs for stormwater service are continuing to increase. Program staff continue to take on new roles while staff size and resources remain relatively static. The Environmental Scan provided the County with an introspective look at County stormwater operations and offered analysis of their perceived internal and external strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and how these factors impact the program.

The Environmental Scan focused on funding to the extent that resource availability and allocation are keys to describing the business area environment. Funding discussions





centered largely on the conceptual funding sources for stormwater programming, including primary and secondary funding sources. Primary funding sources discussed included general fund appropriations, stormwater service fees, and general obligation and revenue bonds. Secondary funding sources included special assessments, pro-rata share programs, watershed improvement districts, federal and state grant funding, in-lieu-of-construction fees, and other service fees.

G. 2003 STORMWATER MANAGEMENT BUSINESS AREA STRATEGIC PLAN

As a follow up to the 2003 Environmental Scan, the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services Stormwater Management Business Area initiated a Strategic Plan. The purpose of the Strategic Plan was to focus future decision-making within the Stormwater Management Business Area and to provide a management tool from which to judge progress towards meeting the STW's Mission Statement and its major goals regarding resources, reputation, programs, and people.

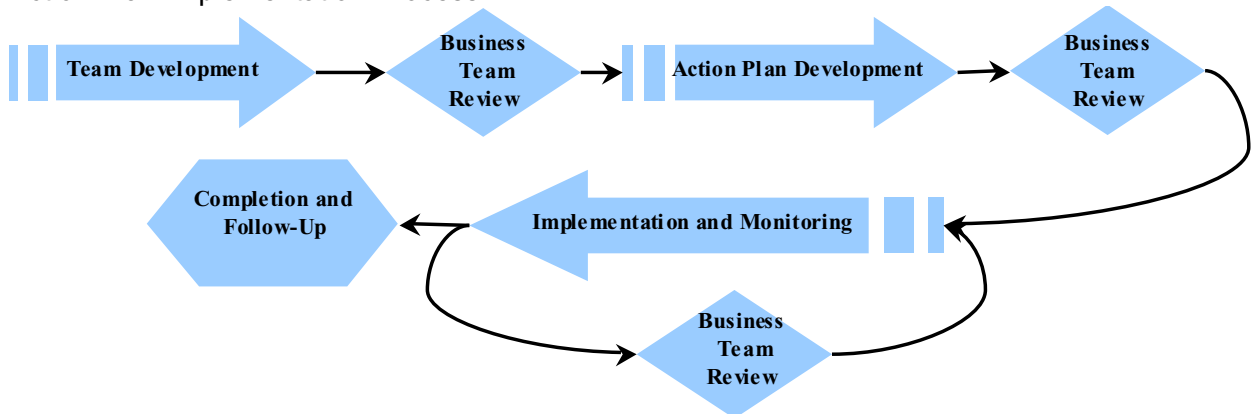
Through the Strategic Plan, the STW identified four goals, 10 strategies, and 35 tactics to form the basis for focusing future efforts. One of the four goals, "To be an effective steward of the County's resources," touches directly on the issue of establishing sustainable resources, and included as a tactic "Develop and implement a funding feasibility study for alternative methods and funding sources." Four specific tactics, where close coordination will be critical to successful implementation, will be used as performance measures for the County's Performance Measurement Budget Plan in support of the County's Strategic Vision Elements. These include:

- Be a good steward in implementing the commitments of the Chesapeake Bay Agreement.
- Maintain a comprehensive watershed management program under the MS4 permit.
- Develop an integrated emergency response program.
- Support County air quality initiatives.

Each Tactic contained in the Strategic Plan will be achieved through the development of a detailed Action Plan. The directors of the Maintenance and Stormwater Management Division and the Stormwater Planning Division will be responsible for maintaining a master calendar to track Action Plan milestones.



Action Plan Implementation Process



ANALYSIS

As in the Environmental Scan, the Strategic Plan document was designed to focus on core values, mission, priorities, and action plan development for the STW. While neither document addressed program funding in detail, both establish the premise for moving forward with examining different funding options by recognizing that funding and resource availability are key elements to the County fulfilling the vision and mission established for the stormwater program.



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